



Americarna rolls through town

These beauties were captured by six year old Michael Gibbon - what a great effort!



editorial FROM THE TOM ZONE

The Cuisine Artesan Food awards caught my eye the other day. These are awards handed out to hand crafted products and producers for innovation and quality. I couldn't help but marvel again at the energy and enthusiasm some people put into producing top quality goods. Farmers markets epitomise this too but do supermarkets? Gosh no is the first thought.



Sherrie from Fresha was enthusing to me about the wonderful flavours and goodness of artisan products and how they love stocking them in their store and this made me again think about supermarket food. Surely it isn't all bad just mass produced but what does this do to the end product. Mr Wattie and Mr Edmond and Mr Cadbury must have all started out as cottage industries – small enterprises producing quality goods that the market really liked and so the production increased and food handling techniques changed with it. Now we are going back and worshipping the humble beginnings for the flavour and goodness that mass production has taken away. Funny thing isn't it – life! I must say hand cooked, salted, packed chips or crisps as they call them, from Nelson are just the best snack around for me at the moment.

Kim

2010 Directory

Email kim@thetom.co.nz with details for 2010 business listings in the TOM phone directory. If you have changed your address, phone or are a new business please let Kim know by 20th March.

TOM dates for April
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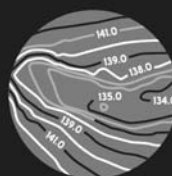
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Hello everyone,

Wishing Tara well for the delivery of her first baby due any day now. Many of you will remember her as a former Oakura librarian. I recently read *The Wonky Donkey* to the junior classes at Oakura School and it was a huge hit. This humorous, rhyming picture book was written by New Zealander Craig Smith. I had as much fun reading it aloud as the children had listening to the tongue-twisting story.

A huge thanks to Simon and Suki Bishop for donating a comfy couch to the library. It's a great place to sit and read your children some wonderful stories. We have a collection of toddler books made of sturdy cardboard. A perfect size for those little hands. Ask us about our level 1-3 new readers. They are ideal for emerging readers. Audio picture books are very popular with preschoolers as well.

Yes, the latest book in the *No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* series is now available; it's *The Double Comfort Safari Club*. You can view the weekly programme on TV now, too.

We have the latest releases by your favourite authors: Lee Childs, Josephine Cox and John Grisham. Yes, it's \$1.50 to reserve your copy but think of all the petrol, time and parking woes you can save yourself.

We'd love to hear about your book, CD, DVD, and magazine wish lists. Are there any titles that you'd like us to purchase for the library?

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Karen and Vincenza

Oakura Ladies' Book Club

Oakura Ladies' Book Club has changed venue and is now meeting at the Oakura Village Cafe. Meetings are open, so please join us if you are interested in reading fascinating and challenging books!

January brought us *Digging To America* by Anne Tyler, a book that turned out to be less about foreign babies adopted from abroad and more about belonging, family and friendship.

The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini was enjoyed by members in February; an incredible book about a boy from Afghanistan and his efforts in finding redemption.

For more information on the Book Club please find us on Facebook or contact the Oakura Public Library.

by Jennifer Gros

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Hi folks,

Wow, what an awesome summer we're having here in Taranaki! We've had events for Africa, with plenty more to come, and even the weather has come to the party (well, it was sunny when I wrote this!).

Americana, cricket, Cliff Richard, the surf champs, WOMAD — there's something for everyone this year. And we've just wrapped up another great TSB Bank Festival of Lights, although we'll be switching the lights on for Cliff and WOMAD so visitors can see what a vibrant place we live in!

On 24 February the Council met to consider the 2010/11 Annual Plan. Watch for more information in the media, and on our Seven Days page in the Midweek. After an economic downturn our emphasis with this plan has been on exercising restraint while maintaining progress — maximum service for minimum cost. The draft goes to the auditors after we've signed it off and then consultation will begin on 30 March. The final plan is approved in late June and kicks into action on 1 July.

Another thing to mention is the upcoming Taranaki War exhibition at Puke Ariki. This exhibition is an unflinching look at the harsh reality of war and colonisation in Taranaki. It's an absolute 'must-see' and begins on 17 March — 150 years to the day after the first shots were fired in a bloody conflict lasting 21 years.

That's all from me, but remember, please give me a call if you'd like to discuss anything about Oakura or the wider district. My direct line is 06-759 6100.

Peter Tennent, Mayor

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Letter to the Editor

Our family of four — dad, mum, and two preschool daughters — have just returned from a holiday in Bali. And you are wondering, so what?

Well, we have something important to share that happened to us while travelling there.

Before we left we said to ourselves, let's try to leave as little rubbish as possible behind in Indonesia... the journey began when Alex, my husband, said, what about taking cloth nappies? Oh no! I thought to myself, here we go... but I listened and I was a 'good girl' and we took 10 cloth nappies with us.

We arrived in Bali and we either had our one-year-old daughter in no nappies or cloth nappies. I just had to rinse them and then send them to be washed (lovely, they returned well folded and smelling much better!!!).

So here is the bit why we would like to share this experience with the world. If you are wondering whether to take cloth nappies to Indonesia (and I'm sure to other countries as well, a bit of Google search would help), do it!! Don't think about it for one minute. We also took some disposable German nappies that we used in special situations such as diarrhoea, on planes, etc. But overall, taking cloth nappies was a very environmentally friendly idea.

Then there was the water issue. You are supposed to buy your water in one litre bottles — and you have to buy, you cannot drink from the tap. Initially we thought staying for two weeks would be easy, we would refill our drinking bottles that we brought from New Zealand, and we had a 20 litre bottle to refill in our room. That made us feel happy and good in our zero waste travel.

The problem began when we arrived in Ubud. In some places we could refill our bottles for free, and then it got harder, to the point where we had to get three one litre plastic bottles. But Alex left one day, determined to get a 20 litre bottle. For few days no one wanted to sell one, but he got one!!! Well done! So, what is the message we are trying to give you? Try, try and try a bit harder and you can succeed if you really want.

Straws in Bali, fruit juices everywhere... plastic straws... we thought we'd take our own. We had a couple of metal ones, so that helped us to reduce the amount of rubbish. We went to an organic restaurant and they had made straws of bamboo sticks. What a good idea!!! So can you imagine how many straws we saved? How much plastic rubbish we saved? A small but worthwhile amount... There is also the alternative of cornstarch straws and they are a very good price too. Look for them, make your own bamboo ones and say no to plastic straws — especially when you have little girls and they love them so much.

We also took our takeaway coffee cups. They were filled a few times with strawberry and mango juice and, of course, coffee. So again, no plastic cups, no rubbish, re-using as much possible.

It is not that we are saints, but I thought we'd share what we did and it may make you think. And maybe next time you may say no to plastic bags and take your own cloth bag.

Here in New Zealand we have many festivals during the year. For the last year our family has taken bowls, cutlery and cups to festivals. That way we really make it zero waste. It is nice to see the reaction of people in the food stalls, "Wow, well done! Good on you mate!"

So, this is an open invitation for you to take action, be proactive and do what you have to do to help the earth. Really what we want to do with this is to print a message of peace, care and awareness that the earth, the planet, is really so polluted and contaminated that if we don't start small and start now, then what?

Our three-year-old daughter picks up rubbish from the beach without being told — is this not a beautiful heritage we can give to them?

Wishing you all peace, growth, happiness and harmony in this New Year.

Sun Nest Team - Aileen

Oakura Fire Brigade

Greetings from all at the Big Red Truck.

We hope you all had an enjoyable festive season and are relishing the nice warm weather.

It has been a quiet summer for the Oakura Brigade with very few callouts.

It is with some sadness we will be saying goodbye to the Bishop family as they move south to Dunedin in March. I am sure it will not be goodbye, but rather see you later. We wish Simon, Suki, Alex and Jaime all the best with their move south.

Fire Safety in Your Home

Three minutes is all it takes to lose your home and your family to fire. If you haven't got working *smoke alarms* installed, go out and get them now.

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Fact: *If a child has planned and practised an escape plan, they are more likely to get out alive in a house fire.*

Children easily get lost or disorientated in smoke. So can adults. A regularly practised escape plan can save lives.

Fact: *Breathing smoke from a fire can overwhelm you in seconds (smoke is more deadly than flames).*

GET DOWN, GET LOW, GET OUT. Smoke is poisonous, get underneath it by crawling along the floor to get out.

All the best and stay safe,

Mel Breeze (Sec)



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Creative Carmen's scholarship

As a creative youngster, Carmen Rogers remembers typing classes at school and geography (taken only to go on a fun field trip). She was encouraged to curb her creative talent and study to get a 'more traditional job'. Carmen knew early on that these subjects would not lead to her dream job.

Now, at 37, a third year Bachelor of Visual Arts student (Fine Arts strand) at WITT, Carmen is realising her creativity. She has enjoyed multiple style awards in several regional Wearable Art exhibitions.

With a transcript of study results reflecting A or A- for all papers, her scholarship application caught the eye of the Betty Loughhead Soroptimists Society, who awarded Carmen their scholarship. The award is to enable women who are 25 years or older and have maintained a high level of academic proficiency, to gain or further their qualifications. Her work with screen-printing, etching, painting and sculpture has earned her success, but Carmen says, "I have taken directions that I would not ordinarily have taken," due to financial restraint at times. While thankful for that learning, Carmen will use the financial assistance to expand more of her ideas. Carmen lives on the outskirts of Oakura with husband, Che (graphic designer), and daughters, Nouveau (11) and Teal (6).

By Sharon Van Dijk



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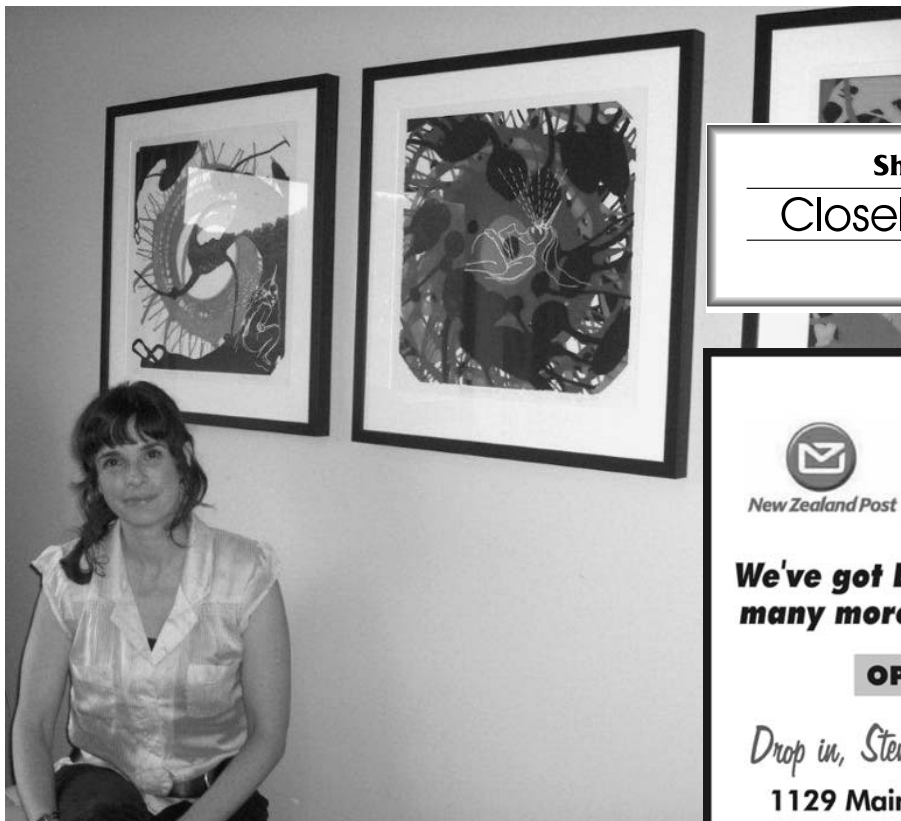
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Carmen with her art work.

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Looking at giving a hand up, not a hand out

No doubt there are some of you who were born prior to or during the Great Depression of 1930-1932 when average farm incomes for a short time dipped to below zero, and unemployment rates peaked and, unlike later years, there was no unemployment benefit. If you are not in that age group you have probably heard from parents and grandparents how difficult the times were.

It wasn't until the mid 1930's when there were more positive financial conditions that a full welfare state could be established, including free healthcare, education, and state assistance for the elderly, infirm and unemployed. Subsequent governments have enacted legislation to allow further benefits to be paid, including the Domestic Purposes Benefit.

The National led Government's intention is to offer a hand up rather than a hand out. That is why it is committed to a benefit system that is fair to those who need help and fair to taxpayers supporting the system.

This year the Government will spend an estimated \$7.6 billion on benefits and income support. That's more than \$20 million a day. It's critical that this money is spent effectively.

National campaigned on making changes to the welfare system. We believe that New Zealand's benefit system is there to provide genuine support for those who need it. We recognise that there are people who will realistically never be able to work due to particular medical conditions and we will continue to support them.

But we also believe that the benefit system should not support those who lack the will or desire to work as hard for their living as their fellow New Zealanders.

We need to change some of the incentives in our benefit system to encourage people into jobs. Getting people into work is the best way to achieve good long term outcomes for those people and their families. Long term welfare dependency imprisons people in a life of limited outcomes and limited choices.

This year the Government will introduce legislation to reform benefits, in line with our election commitments. These reforms, which we will detail soon, will:

- introduce more active assessment, including getting those receiving the Unemployment Benefit to reapply after a year
- introduce greater obligations and tougher sanctions
- provide support to get people into work through incentives and training.

Our benefit reforms will focus squarely on helping people get back to work as soon as possible, and ensuring that they do so. These reforms will have positive effects not just for beneficiaries and their families, but for the long-term sustainability of our welfare system.

Jonathan Young MP

Jonathan Young

MP for New Plymouth

For constituent appointments, please contact my Electorate Office in New Plymouth

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The Cuisine Artisan Award winners have been announced and we are proud to stock many of the winning products. The artisan awards are about recognizing the passion and excellence that small New Zealand producers devote to their businesses. It's about acknowledging and supporting our New Zealand food heroes. Great care is taken to bring these products to market, here is a selection of products available at Fresha for you to enjoy with your friends and family.

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And over the ditch ... Gourmet Guru says she hopes to change the way people think about their food in her new role as **Senior Australian of the Year**.

A range of Maggie Beer products are also available at Fresha.

Have a great month everyone, I'll be back with more food news next month.

Sherrrie X



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TOM SPORTS



A recent kayak fishing trip up to the Cliffs saw Kyle Adams nail this Kingi.



Greetings all,

With the gnarly south-westerlies we got over the holiday period not many fish were caught. However, it really started to pick up in February for both kayakers and surfcasters. Kayakers paddled upon big schools of Tuna and Kahawai not too far out, and surfcasters hooked into many Kahawai off local beaches. One or two Snapper have been recorded by surfcasters from the Tapaue and out towards Waitara, along with quite a few nice

Snapper caught by kayakers off the White Cliffs. We had some perfect days up at the Cliffs in early February, however Murphy's Law came into play and they all fell on weekdays, with only one or two able to take advantage and fill their catch bags.

The odd Kingi has been smoking our kayakers too. Local man, Kyle Adam, recently managed to snag the one pictured.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes our organising team has been really busy getting things teed up for the Third Annual Taranaki Kayak Classic. There is a feast of prizes up for grabs, worth in excess of about \$20,000. Go to the website - www.kayakfishingclassic.co.nz and check it out.

This year we will again be holding the popular Charity Fish Auction, with the proceeds going to Coast Guard Taranaki. All this is happening on the weekend of 10-11 April 2010.

This month the NZ Angling & Casting Association are again holding their national event in the lovely Coromandel. An entourage of our members will be giving it all they've got to bring home some of the many awards.

Don't forget, if you want to get into kayak fishing or if you prefer terra firma and want to get into beach or rock fishing, the best way to find out more is to contact us: phone Garry H on 06-752 7055 or Debbie 06-752 7425.

Tight lines, Debbie E

Get your Kayak Fishing Competition entries in.

The Oakura Kayak and Surfcasters Club is holding its annual kayak fishing competition on the 10th and 11th April. This event is a must do for any keen fisherman and the weigh-in of fish on the final day followed by the charity fish auction is a great occasion for those not wanting to venture out in a kayak. Proceeds from the auction go to Coastguard Taranaki and at last years event around \$1200 was raised for Taranaki Surf Life Saving. This year the main sponsor is Viking Kayaks who will donate a Viking Nemo 2 and a tandem kayak to the lucky winners of the early bird entry draw. Other main prizes are a top of the line fully rigged Viking Pro Fish fishing kayak, and a Viking Esprit Fisherman kayak, plus there is a \$1000.00 travel voucher from Oakura Travel Centre. The total prize pool is in excess of \$20,000. Entry is \$80.00. Entry forms are available from Hunting & Fishing, Canoe & Kayak, Heydon Priest Garage, Oakura, Oakura Holiday Park and Tasman Marine.

Headquarters for the event is Butlers Reef Hotel in Oakura and this is where kayak fishing guru Steven Tapp will be holding a seminar on how to set up a kayak for fishing and where registration takes place. Steven is a writer for NZ Fishing News and is regarded as a leading kayak fisherman. The general public is welcome to come along.

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Oakura Pony Club

Pony Club eventing season is in full swing with events on most weekends. As usual, Oakura Pony Club riders have been doing extremely well and below are some of the most recent results.

Okato Pony Club One-Day Event, December 2009

Jordan Giltrap (on Celtic Limelight) 1st and Georgia Ferris (My Vagabond) 4th in the Pre-Training; Anna Hinton (Sexy B) 1st and Lauren Moorby (Endless Spirit) 3rd in the DC Under-17 years.

North Taranaki Pony Clubs One-Day Event, January 2010

Paige Mackay (Nanteous Autumn Apple Blossom) 3rd in the Kindy class; Jess Knudsen (Run the Risk) 1st and Jordan Giltrap (Celtic Limelight) 3rd in the Pre-Training; Bronte Alder (Abby Cadabby) 3rd in the Pre-Training Under-21 years; Tara Harvey (Super Exposed) 1st in the Training class; Anna Hinton (Sexy B) 1st and Lauren Moorby (Endless Spirit) 5th in DC Under-17 years.

Hawera Horse Trials One-Day Event, February 2010

Jess Knudsen (Run the Risk) 3rd in the 11, 12 and 13 years.

Taranaki Area Show Jumping, February 2010

Oakura's team were Andrea Brewster, Bronte Alder, Anna Hinton, Tara Harvey, Jordan Giltrap and Lauren Moorby. The team came fifth overall.

Last month the North Island Dressage Champs were held in Taupo. A competition is held in New Plymouth a month or so beforehand to find the best dressage riders to represent Taranaki in a team, and a whopping five of the team of six riders were from the little Oakura Pony Club (it was noted that the sixth rider, although not from Oakura, was coached by the brilliant Dressage teacher Denise Paterson, who is from Oakura and is the head coach of Oakura Pony Club)! The Taranaki junior team came second overall, and the senior team came fifth overall.

Junior team: Jordan Giltrap (Celtic Limelight) 4th, Catherine West (The Zeuss) 7th. Senior team: Kelsy Bolstad (Humming Bird) 11th, Tara Harvey (Super Exposed) 15th and Hannah Trott (Waka Ahu) 21st.

Oakura Pony Club only has about four more rallies until the end of the season. We will be finishing the season with a Pony Club camp and local gymkhana, which will be loads of fun.

by Diane Alder



Anna Hinton riding Sexy B at the Taranaki Dressage show, which was also a trial for the Taranaki representative team. Anna, with four other Oakura riders, was chosen for the team that competed at Taupo.

Shane Herbert - Lawyer

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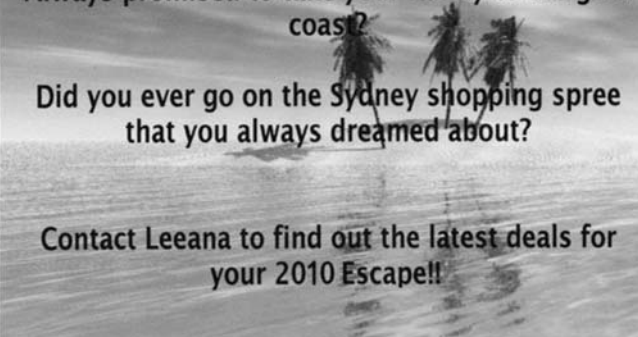
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GETTING WET!



Oakura Boardriders Club

There was once a time when people asked "What were you doing when President Kennedy got shot?" or, in more recent times, "What was happening in your life when Princess Diana took her last fateful drive in Paris, France?" Taranaki snowboarders and skiers reminisce and ask, "Were you on the mountain for the Big Tuesday Dump on July 10 1995 or the Saturday known as Canada Day because of the quantity and quality of the snow? If not, what were you doing?"

And so it is true of Taranaki surfers — there's always time to chat, reflect on and evaluate the quality of the surf and the swell, and the numbers of surfers you had to compete against for waves. Unfortunately, the conversations this summer have mostly been about the lack of decent waves and offshore winds. However, I ask, "What were you doing on Thursday, 4 February when a swell came up from nowhere?"

By Friday morning the word was out and I'm sure the productivity of Taranaki that day was down due to a high rate of absenteeism in the workforce. Let's hope those stories from early February are overshadowed by bigger and better tales of surfing moments.

Over the last few weeks as you've walked, cycled or driven along the beachfront you will have seen a large group of Oakura School children with surfboards and bodyboards enjoying themselves having surfing lessons. We, at Boardriders, have organised these sessions to encourage our local children into surfing and attract young members into the Club. I am overwhelmed with the number of children keen to participate and their enthusiasm.

Paige Hareb was one of many students who participated years ago when we ran similar sessions and we all know of her successes in the sport. As this goes to print she will have competed in her first WCT competition on the Gold Coast and will probably be at Margaret River for her first Qualifying Series competition. Following that, Paige and her mum Fiona Turner are coming home for six days from 22 March, before returning to Australia for the second WCT event at Bells Beach. I was thrilled to hear from Fiona that Paige would love to help with the surfing lessons while she is home. How great for our kids! Of course Paige will be back in Taranaki in April for the TSB Bank Women's Surf Festival. Our Club has the job of organising the catering, so if you are able to help out in any way please get in contact with either Paul Christophers or me, Phil Butt.

In the next TOM I will write about the Interclub Competition being held on Saturday, 6 March, as well as our Club Champs on 20 and 21 March. Don't forget to renew your subscription or join so you can participate. I will also let you know how our young club member, Jordan Hart, got on in the Billabong Grom Competition held in Whangamata on 20 and 21 February.

It was exciting to hear of a competition for Year 7 and 8 students that is co-ordinated by Devon School and New Plymouth Surfriders Club, and supported by the Beach St Surf Shop, and Annette and Brian Kettle. This is the second year that it has been held. Pete Day took five boys from our school to the event on 19 February, which she said was extremely well run. The conditions at Fitzroy Beach certainly tested the 33 boys and four girl competitors as they battled the 3 to 4 foot gnarly surf.



Children who participated in the Year 7 and 8 Surfing competition held at Fitzroy beach on Friday 19 Feb). From left, Jonti Hine (Oakura School), Jack O'Donnell (Oakura School), Daniel Barron (Oakura School), Timi Te Ua (Oakura School), Isaac Hardie Boys (Highlands Intermediate), Angus White (Oakura School).

Many opted to ride the white water, although some of the stronger ones managed to get out the back. The five boys, who we can be very proud of, were Daniel Barron, Jonti Hine, Jack O'Donnell, Timi Te Ua and Angus White. Daniel got through to the quarter finals and Jonti came third in the finals. The winner was Isaac Kettle, with Ethan Tate in second place and Theo Betteridge in fourth place.

I trust those of you who are keen on skateboarding or snowboarding were able to watch over and over again in awe as American Shaun White demonstrated why he is the greatest halfpipe rider in the world at the recent Winter Olympics. I wonder what he could do on a surfboard!

Philippa Butt

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Bayleys Mountain to Surf event

This year's Mountain to Surf on Saturday 6th March saw a swag of locals enter and TOM caught up with a few of them before the big day to see how prep was going and why they entered. We asked them a few questions and this is what they had to say.

Bob Fleming and Carol Dawkins

Team profiled by Bob Fleming

Why did you enter?

Carol made me!!

What does the race involve for you?

2 x 21 km legs, one each.

Is this the first time you have entered?

Yes.

What training have you done?

Not enough!! Xmas got in the way J I started running in September after a "few" years off. Was going good till the Big Fat Man in the Red Suit arrived!

What are your strengths?

I have a sense of humour.

What do you hope to achieve?

To finish in one piece and preferably not on a stretcher! At the end of the day, I'm back out there running and that is a good thing.

Kim Harrison and Mark Birdsall

Team profiled by Mark Birdsall

Why did you enter?

To run the complete marathon but have had to fall back to the 1/2, due to injury and lack of training.

What does the race involve you?

2 x legs of 21 kms each.

Is this the first time you have entered?

No, first entered in 2008.

What training have you done?

Been training since October but have had the last few weeks off due to a muscle strain.

What are your strengths?

Dogged perseverance.

What do you hope to achieve?

Anything under 2 hrs is fine, under 1:45 will be great.

Profile by Kim Harrison

Why did you enter?

To challenge myself.

Is this the first time you have entered?

No, I ran the 2nd half last year, this year I'm trying the 1st half.

What training have you done?

Have increased my running, mainly by running the longer

distances each week on a Saturday. I've used the training programme on the NP Harriers website as a guide.

What are your strengths?

Keeping to the programme!!! Thanks to my great running partner Kim Harrison! And determination.

What do you hope to achieve?

It was to finish the run, now it's to get a good time and enjoy it!

Claire Florence and Fe Brown

Team profiled by Claire Florence

Why did you enter?

It was a goal of mine to run a half marathon by a certain age!! And that age happens to be at the end of this year . . .

What does the race involve?

Marathon run as a team.

Is this the first time you have entered?

Yes.

What training have you done?

I followed a training programme which was running five times a week. Runs can be from 30min to 2hrs long.

What are your strengths?

Keeping to the programme!!! Thanks to my great running partner Kim Harrison!

What do you hope to achieve?

It was to finish the run, now its to get a good time!

Profile by Fe Brown

Why did you enter?

Claire got me at a moment of weakness during New Years eve!!!!!!!

What does the race involve for you?

Lots of dedication, commitment and plenty of good food, Oh yeah!

Is this the first time you have entered?

Yes.

What training have you done?

Not as much as I should have, having been asked only seven weeks ago. I have a programme which guides me, so I am running five days a week with one of those being up to 20 odd kilometres. The others are between 8 – 12 kilometre runs.

What are your strengths?

Breathing – it does help when I'm running.

What do you hope to achieve?

A sense of self satisfaction, knowing if I put my mind to something I really can do it.

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Nici Palmer - Sculptoress

To me, art is a living organism and this is exemplified in Nici Palmer's stone sculptures. I am no art expert but good art speaks to me and Nici's sculpture has a voice and a spirituality, possibly unique to her art.

Nici Palmer is a local multimedia artist, now specialising in sculpture. She has dabbled in various art forms all her life beginning with photography while a child. In the early days of the first café in the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, nigh on 40 years ago, Nici dwelt on the fringes of this Bohemian lifestyle, mixing with the arty farty but mostly developing a passion for art. It was here that Nici began photography in its rawest form, making her own gear and developing her own film. Over the decades Nici has studied paint, clay, joinery, metalwork, garment construction and pattern making, finishing with a Diploma in Art and Design from WITT.

It was in the Waikato in 2000 that Nici found the art form of stone sculpturing and it has been a deep

passion ever since. Nici attended a course for the unemployed where over many months she learnt the techniques to create stone artworks. As a group the attendees created four sculptures that reside in Raglan today.

At a symposium in Raglan Nici brought to life a Raglan andesite boulder in the shape of 'Ocean Breeze'. It is a fascinating story. Nici had the vision of sculpting a woman with flowing hair who looked like she was windswept from the sea, and as she was beginning her work a woman happened to come by with the exact sort of hair that Nici was contemplating sculpting. This woman agreed to pose and her name was Ocean — very serendipitous. Ocean hailed from Canada and as the artwork progressed the two women discovered they had many mutual friends and acquaintances. Once finished, Nici's sister bought the sculpture at auction and it now graces her garden near the sea.

Nici's latest sculpture is a work of love. It is a marble headstone for a dear friend, Tania Todd, who died a year ago. Nici has created a sculpture that reflects the things Tania loved, and carved the stone out of respect for the inspiration and admiration she felt and still feels for Tania. The sculpture was unveiled at the Okato Cemetery on 23 January.

Stone sculpting is hard physical work, demanding deep focus and a clear mind but Nici says the process is unbelievable. Each piece is a deep personal journey that she goes on alone and then others get to enjoy the end result. Even at a symposium where she may be surrounded by people, Nici is alone with her stone. It seems as if the stone seduces her and she is creating something inspired by nature that will live in the elements and survive forever. There is enormous satisfaction in creating something with such longevity.

Nici is keen to do commissions for people and will either design and create an original sculpture, or work alongside a client to create something from their own inspiration. Currently she has pieces on sale at Kina NZ Design and Art Space but her eyes light up when she talks about focusing on sculptures in hard stone that people really want in their own gardens, homes or businesses.

Contact Nici on 021-1105860 for more details.

By Kim Ferens

One tonne of andesite carved by Nici to become the beautiful 'Ocean Breeze' sculpture.



Nici with one of her sculptures in Hinuera stone called 'Lily'.



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Local club puts on rock concert

Warea Rock is on again, bigger and better than last year, on Saturday, 20 March. Warea Rock is held at the Old Warea Bowling Club, which is now the Warea Croquet Club, on Main Road, Warea. The Club was formed three years ago to make use of the old Bowling Club, which was no longer being used. The Club members cleaned it up and started playing croquet there once a month. Warea Rock is in its third year and is done primarily as a fundraiser for the Club but also as a social event for the community.

Warea Rock gets off the ground with seven bands, featuring rock band Sniper Alley, Reggae band Ire Exit, and local bands Painted Black, Alan Manu, Morgana, The Flies, and Mexican Blackbird. Bands start at 1 pm.

Tickets are \$10 for pre-sales and \$15 on the day; kids are free. Tickets can be purchased at Okato Four Square and Coastal Welders, Warea. There will be a licensed bar with BYO wine only, and all day BBQ. EFTPOS available. Camping is available this year and a courtesy van will be running until late. For more information ring Mark Fox on 06-752 4117 or 027-2384718 and Shane Honeyfield 06-752 8268 or 027-2038111.

Kaitake Kindergarten

Finally we have our fabulous new permanent shade over the sandpit and swing areas. Not only does it look great, but it will also withstand our adverse weather conditions and means that we don't have to worry about maintaining the old shade fabric, which can be prone to ripping in high winds.



The new sun shade at Kaitake Kindergarten.

This fantastic new asset to the Kindergarten will allow the children to use the swings and sandpit areas all year round. This is so important as the sandpit is an area where children can develop their large motor skills through digging, moving the sand and manoeuvring equipment.

Valuable social skills are learned too, as there can be a great deal of negotiating for some of the very popular equipment, like the diggers. The shade has been a long-term goal for past and present committee members and parents who have worked so hard to make it happen, and is the first stage of the playground upgrade.

We are planning an official opening of the permanent shade in the near future to thank all concerned for their amazing efforts. All the Kindergarten families will be invited to join in the celebrations.

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Your March Checklist

Vegetables:

This month is an important time to be planting the winter seedlings of beetroot, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, spinach and silverbeet, but do watch out for white butterflies.

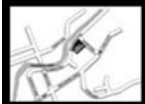
Flowers:

It's bulb time already! Plant daffodils, tulips, ranunculus, anemones, grape hyacinths, irises, freesias, crocuses, etc.

Cut back, lift and divide perennials.

Feed and deadhead all roses.

Feed ornamental trees and shrubs while they are in the active autumn growth.



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Senior students get extra swimming training

This year the Year 7 and 8 students of Rooms 10 and 11 at Oakura School are taking part in an extra swimming programme with swimming instructor Julie Nielson. This programme includes four one-hour sessions at the New Plymouth Aquatic Centre and three more sessions where Mrs Nielson will be coming to teach at the school pool. The programme finishes with a trip to the beach where we will be putting our newly learnt skills to use in the ocean!

We have taken one trip to the Aquatic Centre already on 9 February and we have learnt many survival strokes like swimming on your side and different versions of backstroke and breast stroke that many of us had never heard of before. We are working to master these strokes so that we are able to use them in the future in case of need.

We also worked on simple strokes like freestyle, backstroke and breaststroke so that Mrs Nielson can put us into groups for further instruction at our appropriate levels.

We all enjoyed our first session and are looking forward to more sessions with Mrs Nielson over the next few weeks.

Molly Cattell (aged 12 years)

New teachers start at Oakura School

This year we have two new teachers at Oakura School, Mr Richard Rudman, who is teaching Years 7 and 8 in Room 11, and Miss Megan Simpson, who is teaching Years 5 and 6 in Room 9.

Mr Rudman has recently married and moved from Auckland, and Miss Simpson has moved to Taranaki from Rotorua. We are very happy that they have joined our school community and hope that they have a great year at Oakura School.

Jessie Webster (aged 12 years)



New teachers, Miss Megan Simpson and Mr Richard Rudman.



Oakura River water quality gets thumbs up

On Monday, 15 February the middle school syndicate of Oakura School went on a field trip to the Oakura River. They met with Mr Archer from the New Plymouth District Council to test the water quality of the river.

The testing system is on a scale of 0–120; 120 or more meaning excellent water quality. To get a score, the students had to find and identify creatures that live in the river. Each creature had a score in the range of 1–10; 1 meaning the creature doesn't hunt for good quality water and will just settle anywhere, and 10 meaning the creature is extremely fussy and will only live in top quality water.

The students found 19 different creatures, and to get the total score for our river they added up all the scores of the creatures they found, divided it by 19 and added 20. The total score for Oakura River was 96.

Ninety-six is not a bad score, but people still need to be conscious of the fact that it is our job as a community to keep our rivers and streams healthy. Litter and chemicals do not belong in our river, so let's keep them out.

Amy Benton (aged 12 years)

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Upcoming Events

March

- 11 Early finish 12.30pm
Teachers' Union Meeting
- 16 Year 7/8 swimming display
(Aquatic Centre) 9.30am
- 18 Playgroup 9-11am
- 30 3D conferences
Early finish 12pm
- 31 3D conferences
Early finish 12pm

April

- 1 Playgroup
Term 1 ends 3pm
- 2 Good Friday
- 19 Term 2 begins

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Introducing Our Lead Ambassadors for 2010

Hamish Dunn, Olivia Holt, Jade Megaw and Catherine Barlow.



All students in Year 7 and 8 have the opportunity to become ambassadors and be trained in peer mediation and support. We appreciate the help that our RTL, Adrienne Ansley, gives us to train and guide these students to become responsible leaders. Our four lead ambassadors play a key role in leading the student council, representing the school at events, welcoming visitors and buddying up with our new entrants. Next term the Year 8's will be attending the Young Leaders' Conference in Rotorua so they are busy fundraising for this.

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New Staff

The beginning of Term 1 has seen a new face welcomed to the teaching staff at Omata School.

Alexandra (Alex) Hood has joined the Omata junior syndicate and is the school's new Year 2 teacher in Room Five.

Alex completed her teacher training at Christchurch in 2009; she is, however, originally from Timaru and during her primary years attended a four-classroom school not too dissimilar to Omata.

When her partner, a chemical engineer, secured employment in Taranaki, Alex set her sights on finding a teaching position in a semi-rural school in the region, preferably teaching children between Year 1 and 4.

The vacancy teaching the Year 2 class at the 'Best Little School in the West' fitted the bill perfectly.

Alex says although she enjoyed the experience of teaching in large schools during her teacher training, she still prefers the smaller school environment. She goes on to say that the community feeling you get at a small school is really special and she likes the fact that at a smaller school the entire teaching staff is able to work together collaboratively. She also thinks it's important that children across all age levels are able to play and interact together and are not separated as they often are at larger schools.

When I spoke with Alex it was the second week of the term and the Community BBQ and Meet The Teacher Night had just been held. She says she really enjoyed the opportunity to meet the parents of her students as well as other families from the Omata School community.

Her class of 19 students, which is predominantly boys, are a great bunch of children and Alex says they are settling into the new school year really well.

Finally, when asked what she hopes to bring to her new role at Omata School Alex told me that she is "passionate about literacy" and that she hopes to bring fresh and new ideas to her teaching role.

By Jackie Tomlinson



**New teacher,
Alex Hood.**

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2009 Cup Recipient

TOM omitted to print details in last months TOM regarding Bailey Hooson and her achievements in receiving two cups at the end of year prizegiving. They are The Board of Trustees Cup for Academic Achievement and the Home & School Cup jointly shared for Sporting Excellence. Well done Bailey.

National Standards

You can't help but notice there is controversy over the introduction of National Standards and that schools, teachers, educationalists and principals are not happy with the way these have been introduced. The Standards themselves we do not have a problem with, they will be useful as yet another measuring tool to assess your child's progress.

At Omata we use many nationally levelled or normed measures including e-asttle, PAT tests, STAR tests, numeracy testing, running records for reading and writing progressions. This information is shared with you at 3D conferences and summarised in reports, so you get a clear picture of where your child is at and the progress they are making.

I do know there are some students, schools, teachers and principals who need support to lift their achievement. This is where I would like to see the millions of dollars going. This is what the education sector is crying out for — more Reading Recovery, more behavioural support, more advisors, more special needs support, and action for schools and teachers that are struggling, not more tools to measure. Your child's achievement and progress cannot be simplified to a Plunket style graph; it is complex.

I wholeheartedly support the Government's *intent* to lift the 20% 'tail' of underachievement but the biggest problem is the link between educational underachievement and poverty. This will not be solved by National Standards. There are wider issues at play here. I endorse the notion that parents need to know where their child is at in literacy and numeracy, and at Omata you will be given a clear picture of that throughout the year as well as how they are doing in many other areas of learning and competencies.

Our outstanding teachers are doing a wonderful job and work really hard to instil in your child a love of learning and to lift their achievement. I know we are feeling quite hurt with the 'teacher bashing' comments in the media lately as we are passionate about the job we do and we have the best interests of children and learning at heart.

Karen



Bailey Hooson.

Playcentre

I don't know about all you mums and dads out there, but I love love love the school holidays. I love leisurely breakfasts, lazy days and spontaneous family evening walks down the beach. The holidays always seem to come to an end too quickly. So does summer for that matter. But looking on the bright side, without routine there would be no real appreciation of holidays and without winter I would be brown and warm all the time. Hmmmmm the later sounds like a preferable option. Anyway back to school means back to Playcentre, which is one of my favourite places to hang out with our youngest child Stone. This term has started with much enthusiasm from children and parents alike. At every Playcentre session there are 16 areas of play set up for the children's imagination and learning to be stimulated. The areas of play are; clay, paint, sand, music, collage, finger-paint, blocks, water, science, carpentry, family/dramatics, books/storytelling, outdoor/physical and manipulative play, (puzzles).

As well as these 16 areas of play the parents plan extra activities for the children that are based on the children's interests. So far this term this has included painting terracotta flowerpots, planting vege plants and setting up a water slide. From these activities children learnt co-ordination, creativity, expression, turn taking, sharing, the list is endless. Children learn so much through play and we as parents really are there first teachers.

Oakura Playcentre is proving very popular. We have welcomed many new families, some coming from New Plymouth to attend. As we are reaching our maximum numbers of children (30) for our Monday and Wednesday sessions, we are looking forward to opening on a Friday morning next term.

Sarsha Hood



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Around Town with Jennifer

Sophie Willis at the first tennis match of the season for Oakura School.



Tessa Deacle and Olivia Cook at a fairy party at Pukekura Park during the Festival of Lights Summer Scene.



Amanda Pearce with a few friends at her farewell luncheon at The Bach at Breakwater (pictured: Alex Thompson, Amanda Pearce, Hayley Ingram, Catherine Deeley). A special farewell to Amanda, Jack, Max and Saul as they head to Perth, Australia.



A sad farewell to the Milam family as they depart this month for the US. Tom, Noelle, Mary Grace, James, Caroline and Wilson head to Wilmington, North Carolina. Thank you, Milams, for the special memories!

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Good Friday 2 April

KORA!!

Kora recently played at the Big Day Out in Auckland and are now looking forward to finally playing at Butlers Reef!

Tickets are \$35 available from Butlers Reef and Crowded House in New Plymouth.

Doors Open 7pm

Bus will be running from Crowded House at 6.30pm and returning after the gig - \$5 each way
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"The driving force in this project has been the protection of the environment – Mangawhai's beautiful harbour and waterways, and EcoCare will deliver on that front."

Neil Tiller – Mayor
Kaipara District Council

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Mondays 10am-12 noon & 6.30-8.30pm, at the Oakura Boardriders Club. Phone Ingrid van Amsterdam on 752 1232 for more info & registration, or email: movetowardfreedom@xtra.co.nz

Bellydance

Every Thursday at Oakura Boardriders Club. 7.15 to 8.30pm. Contact Rosalina at 027 739 1380.

Country and Western Club

Every 1st and 3rd Friday from 8.00pm. Contact Betty West, 89 Wairau Rd. Ph 752 7816.

Hurford - Omata - Oakura Rural Women

Meet 2nd Wednesday each month at 1.00pm. New members welcome. Contact Jean Kurth 751 2274.

Indoor Bowls

Mondays 7.30pm at Oakura Hall.
Ring Mike Vickers 752 7881.

JKA Karate

Tuesdays at Oakura Hall 5.30-6.30pm.
Thursdays at Oakura Hall 6.00-7.00pm.
Contact Jim Hoskin 752 7337.

Mini Groovers

Tuesday mornings 10.00am, Oakura Hall.
Gold coin donation.

Oakura Pool Club

Meets every Wednesday evening 7pm @ Butlers Reef over winter. Ph Stu 752 7407.

Okato Squash Club

Monday Club Night.

Omata Playgroup

Every 2nd Thursday, 9.00am at the Omata Community Hall. Ring 751 2308 for next session date. All parents and pre-schoolers welcome.

Playcentre

Playcentre, Donnelly Street.
Monday and Wednesday, 9.00 to noon.

Plunket Coffee mornings

Wednesday, 9.15am to 11.00am (please arrive before 10.00am). During the winter months, held at attendees homes - please contact Bob Fleming 752 7048 or Fe Burkett, 752 1132, or Claire Florence, 752 7889 to find out where.

Senior Citizens

Meet Tuesdays in St James Church lounge for cards and bowls. All welcome. Phone 753 5705 for enquiries.

St James Church, Oakura

Morning worship 10.00am, 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month.

St John's, Omata

Morning worship 10.00am, 2nd Sunday of the month.

Tai Chi

Evening classes starting 1st week Feb, Thurs 6.30pm, St James Church, Weds 10.30am. Ph Joanna Smith Holley 752 1016 for details.

Volkswagen Club

Events range from car rallies, the YMCA climbing wall, camping, BBQ get togethers and sharing good family times and knowledge.

Contact Brian Goodhue, the El Presidente 752 1290, email podsnail@xnet.co.nz

Yoga

No classes on Saturday and Keith Plummer is taking Tuesday night from 7:30 to 9pm (same time). At Oakura Hall, beginners are welcome. ph 752 7050.

**If you have a story that
you'd like to share
Phone 0800 THE TOM**

TOM supporting our
community spirit